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Letter dated 7 March 2007 from the Secretary-General to the President of the General Assembly

I would be grateful if the attached letter from the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 114.

(*Signed*) **Ban** Ki-moon

07-26404 (E) 080307

Annex

Letter dated 26 February 2007 from the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to the Secretary-General

It is my pleasure to inform you of the support that UNESCO member States have given to the proposal, submitted by the Government of Austria to the General Conference at its thirty-third session (October 2005), to proclaim the year 2008 International Year of Languages.

This support is expressed in General Conference resolution 33C/51, which has been incorporated into the UNESCO Approved Programme and Budget 2006-2007 (33 C/5, para. 05120; see enclosure) and which authorizes me to request the United Nations General Assembly to proclaim 2008 International Year of Languages.

We understand that a number of Member States are currently working to prepare a draft resolution calling for such a proclamation. Should the General Assembly decide to proclaim 2008 International Year of Languages, I wish to assure you that UNESCO stands ready to take on the role and responsibility of lead agency for this important initiative.

UNESCO considers languages and multilingualism cornerstones of the world's cultural diversity and essential conditions for sustainable development in all domains, including cyberspace, education systems, cultural expressions and exchanges, at the international, regional and national levels. To attain this objective, UNESCO's strategy is focused on enhancing and preserving linguistic diversity worldwide and on promoting the recognition of the importance of languages and linguistic diversity in all UNESCO policies and fields of action.

I would be grateful if this letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly for the information of Member States.

(*Signed*) Koïchiro **Matsuura**

Enclosure

Relevant provisions of UNESCO General Conference resolution 33C/51, which has been incorporated into the UNESCO Approved Programme and Budget 2006-2007 (33 C/5, para. 05120)

The General Conference ...

Authorizes the Director-General:

(a) to implement the corresponding plan of action in order to:

(i) foster community access through support for the development of institutional and human capacities in the field of communication and information;

(ii) strengthen capacities of information and media professionals and related training institutions, in particular through new training delivery methods and networking, especially in developing countries and countries in transition;

(iii) foster community-centred development and change by devising strategies and projects to enhance access to information and communication, thereby contributing to empowerment and poverty reduction;

(iv) support the preservation of documentary and audio-visual heritage across all media, inter alia, through the Memory of the World Programme by giving specific recognition to the role of libraries and archives in supporting capacity-building programmes aimed at conservation, preservation and restoration of this heritage, and encourage the application of the provisions of the Charter on the Preservation of Digital Heritage;

(v) promote the expression of pluralism and cultural and linguistic diversity in the media and global information networks, as well as the role of the media in creating dialogue among cultures and civilizations as well as peoples;

(vi) foster understanding among peoples and nations by promoting the production and exchange of pluralist content in traditional and new media which reflects cultural diversity and helps to counter stereotypes;

(vii) request the United Nations General Assembly to proclaim the year 2008 International Year of Languages;

(b) to allocate for this purpose an amount of $6,375,800 for programme costs and $104,700 for indirect programme costs at Headquarters.